February, 2020

# 

**Exploring how to put the Strategic Review into practice, and how to finance it**

* **Results of members’ survey -**

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# Introduction

The General Assembly mandated the Ex Co, Bureau and staff to explore how to operationalize and finance EAPN’s ‘four priorities and underpinning activities’, and, with members, to create a long term, mid-term and short term action plans to guide, monitor and evaluate its implementation. With this aim, during December 2019 and January 2020 member’s survey was conducted online. Each member was asked to provide one filled questionnaire following internal discussions between different parts of their networks/organizations. In total, 23 member responded to the questionnaire and in this report the results of the survey are presented with conclusions and recommendations.

Several methodological remarks should be kept in mind when reading the results. Short-term frame covers the period of next 2 years, mid-term of 5 years, while long-term covers next decade. As members could simply point to the answers that are already proposed but also to provide their own answers, the coding procedure was implemented. Only if three or more respondents pointed to the same issue, the new answer was introduced. The analysis showed that basically no new modalities of answers appeared as open answers were very diverse and not grouping around same issues. These open answers are presented separately, as qualitative information.

When identifying top priorities, only those that are chosen by at least third of quarter of respondents (25%) were presented in the top priority graph, at the beginning of each priority section and section on underpinning activities. However, in the tables are presented all priorities identified by at least 3 respondents.

In addition to the answers to the questions, members occasionally posted more elaborated messages that provide additional insights in the opinions on certain topics. These messages are presented separately from quantitative and qualitative answers to the questions in each section.

# Comparing strengths of priority areas

There are four priority areas defined in the strategic document:

1. policy expertise,
2. Strengthen involvement of PeP
3. Building public support and pressure for the eradication of poverty
4. Advocate and Campaign for Social protection systems.

In addition to that, there is the area of underpinning activities, such as strengthening network, members, etc.

Data presented in the following table indicate that majority of members who participated in the survey evaluate policy expertise as the strongest area of EAPN work. The work with PeP is evaluated as quite strong area by almost half of respondents. Advocacy is evaluated as area in which EAPN works relatively fine, while the EAPN is evaluated as weakest in regards to the building public support and to provide support to its own members and structures.

**Evaluation of strength of priority areas**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority area** | **% of total responses** | | | | |
| Strongest | Quite strong | OK | Quite weak | Weakest |
| Policy expertise | 92.6 | 11.1 | 3.7 | 7.4 | 11.1 |
| PeP | - | 48.1 | 25.9 | 22.2 | 3.7 |
| Public support | - | 11.1 | 7.4 | 37.0 | 44.4 |
| Advocacy and campaign | 3.7 | 22.2 | 40.7 | 22.2 | 3.7 |
| Underpinning activities | 3.7 | 7.4 | 22.2 | 11.1 | 37.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

N=27

***Messages***

*‘Where we have indicated where EAPN is the strongest, doesn't necessarily mean that we are of the opinion that more investment isn't needed here. Traditionally EAPN has been very strong in policy and advocacy work and building positions together with its members. In the last years EAPN has lost part of its strong position as other organization have been positioning themselves stronger at the EU level (and received more EU funding because of this strong positioning). For us it is a vital to have a strong ani-poverty network, which is neutral, defends on the right of all (not one priority group) and advocates for structural changes at the EU level, as EU policies have a strong influence on what is happening in all EU member states. The focus should be on advocacy work to change EU policies, which can be complemented by communication and influencing public opinion.’*

# Priority area A: Policy Expertise of EAPN

Based on the answers networks and EOs provided, four short-term, three mid-term and one long term priorities emerged. In next two years according to the provided opinions, work should focus on implementation of Social Pillar, Poverty Watch, systemic issues.

**Up to three most frequent top short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities**

There are certain limitations to the information obtained in regard to the policy objectives. The answers provided mixture of what to focus on and how to do it. For example, poverty Watch is a tool, but regular poverty monitoring is what we focus on. Or, increased funding is the instrument through which we can strengthen policy focus on certain areas. Similarly to this, the priority which is defined as ‘agreed positions on our priority themes’ remains unclear as priority themes were not proposed. While some members already provided thematic priorities (i.e. food insecurity, energy poverty, etc.), others did not do it, so selection of priority areas should be further elaborated for the next two years. This can be done during EUISG meeting in March and more precise information on priority themes will further inform the operationalization of component ‘agreed position on priority themes’.

In mid-term perspective three priorities emerged: regular monitoring poverty and publishing results in Poverty Watch, with increased funding for policy work and with effective work which will result in poverty reduction that could be attributed to the EAPN work.

The long-term perspective was obviously difficult to imagine and while only offered answer option was chosen by majority of member, some refused to answer or provided other options that are very dispersed and not possible to group in the few categories.

Short-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % of members |
| Action plan for Social Pillar implementation | 22 | 81.5 |
| Agreed positions on our priority themes | 15 | 55.6 |
| All members producing Poverty Watch to monitor situation of poverty | 14 | 51.9 |
| Increased focus on systemic issues (tax, wealth, redistribution) | 12 | 44.4 |

N= 27

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Housing, food insecurity, energy poverty, monitoring structural funds, a strong post-2020 strategy, making the EU Semester more social, climate change and technological change impact on PEPs, SDGs, Social aspects of Green Deal. |

Mid-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Poverty Watch viewed as the seminal report on poverty at national and European levels, and is cited as one of the key publications by our strategic advocacy targets (EU Institutions, national Governments, key media outlets) | 18 | 66,7 |
| Increased funding for policy work | 18 | 66,7 |
| Poverty reduced by X% with evidence of impact of EAPN on relevant policies | 11 | 40,7 |

N= 27

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| To build common European indicators on poverty related to social pillar, to advocate not to take into account the social investment expenditures into the public deficit, housing, tax inequality, energy poverty, refugees, evaluation of EPSR, post 2020 strategy, more social EU Semester, policy papers on EAPN priority areas related to Pillar of Social Rights including position on how to mitigate environmental factors, EU funds, explainers on systemic issues. |

Some members raised concerns with defining quantitative targets, such as percentage of poverty reduction that would be coupled with clear contribution of EAPN to this reduction. Since poverty reduction depends on many factors, it would be risky to set such strategic objective in the context of EAPN contribution.

Long-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Poverty reduced by Y% with evidence of impact of EAPN on contributing policies | 19 | 76.0 |

N= 25

|  |
| --- |
| Other |
| To link the reduction of poverty with SDGs, EAPN as an Observatory on the situation of poverty and social exclusion, with evidence of national territories and the voice of people in poverty; Social Pillar integrated into Semester and aligned to SDGs; linking social with economic and environmental goals, more cohesive Europe; Fight against poverty mainstreamed in all relevant EU policy areas (not only social inclusion domain); take part in the implementation of minimum income schemes. |

Out of 27 networks/EOs who participated in the survey, 21 (77,8%) said they would be able to meaningfully contribute to this priority area at the moment, while 6 reported that they would not be able to contribute now, but they would like to be able to do it in the future. For this to happen they would need different forms of support, such as projects and funding, stronger organizational structure and capacity building.

Ideas about sources for extra finance of policy work include:

* Business sector;
* Other Directions of the European Commission, for instance the one in charge of Environment for financing work in connecting environmental issues with social issues;
* Conduct a campaign at European and national level to ensure the allocation of the 0.5 tax to the EAPN. Some national networks have good experience with that (for example EAPN Spain) so experience can be shared;
* National governments;
* Thematic project applications;
* ESF+, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020
* Some Foundations
* Crowd funding (for example produce documentaries that will serve for this purpose).

In addition to the answering questions, some members posted messages which more explicitly reflect their position on this strategic priority area. They are presented in the following box.

***Messages***

*‘Maintain a high level of policy outputs and respected expertise in EAPN's focus area’.*

*‘Make EAPN again a strong well known and respected organization’.*

*‘Better focus and engagement on policy - this seems to have decreased’.*

*‘Reinforcing what was agreed at the General Assembly, and in the Strategy, we want EAPN to keep doing what we are doing well and recognised for i.e. policy expertise and advocacy. But identify how we can additionally work to build broader public support. We think that as a network we recognize the need to build public support but need to sit together as a network to tease out what this means for EAPN and how we do it. We seem to have jumped this part. We can then use this to develop that part of the implementation plan. It is very difficult to develop this using this questionnaire as the starting point.’*

*‘This priority is structural. Without it we would lose respectability, credibility and our proposals would be inconsistent, so they would not be considered. Applied research can be a source of funding for part of these activities.’*

# Priority area B: Strengthen the involvement of People experiencing Poverty

Results indicate four short-term priorities, two mid-term and one long-term priority which were indicated by three or more networks/EOs. In addition to that, different individual proposals were added in the open answers, presented below. Key findings indicate that members expect systematic integration of PeP in the structures, policy work, decision making, research and campaigning. They ask for stronger links between PeP and policy work, better coordination, as well as more joint work of PeP groups between countries that could be done through projects. The issue of representation of persons participating in the PeP meetings was raised.

Short-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| The role of the PeP meeting, and the PeP national coordinators group, within EAPN are clarified and understood | 23 | 85.2 |
| X% of all our structures consists of PeP | 12 | 44.4 |
| Recommendation of Comm’On Group are understood and implemented | 8 | 29.6 |
| Implementation of the 2017 Dutch resolution agreed and underway | 5 | 18.5 |

N= 27

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| To obtain an official response of the European Parliament and the European Commission to the propositions made in the framework of the PEP meetings; involve EOs in developing models of participation; Within the capacity building work, a process of understanding the political role that can and must have PeP group (including coordinators); Review forms for PEP involvement (including communication); More collective participation, in an improved balance between collective (up) and individual (down). |

Mid-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Have structures in place with allow people experiencing poverty to design and lead advocacy and campaigns on poverty at national and European level (could involve structures, funding, etc.) | 18 | 75.0 |
| X EAPN campaigns have been designed and led by people experiencing poverty | 8 | 33.3 |

N= 24

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| All of our structures are equipped with inclusive methods to help PeP (and all) to participate on equal basis within our structures; Participation of PEP (3rd member of GA delegation should be one PEP; Promote/Organize a working group of PeP able to monitor social policies and specific social measures; Increased capacity and sheared methodology of involvement of PeP into decision making on regional, national and European levels; Recommendation of Comm’On Group are understood and implemented. |

Long-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Establishing a programme of participatory research to complement with people experiencing poverty to feed into our policy work | 19 | 82.6 |

N= 23

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Establish a programme of improved feeding of policy work by better integrating of the PEP's expertise; Active contribution/involvement of PEP in research formulation; Guarantee that PeP have a space for participation in key structures at national and European level; More exchanges between PeP groups within EAPN. Financial support for regional projects for example; Permanent reflection on covering different types/dimensions of poverty with PeP involved in EAPN's work. |

Out of 27 networks/EOs responded to the survey 20 (74.1%) reported that is able to meaningfully contribute to this priority area, while 7 said that it is not able at this moment. Those who are not currently able, usually say that the reason is the lack of experience, know-how in working with PeP, and in case of umbrella organizations the distance from PeP with whom usually smaller, grass-roots member organizations work. For some, this is costly as it requires the personnel and time dedicated to work more with PeP. All 7 members who are currently not able to contribute would like to do so, but they will require training, methodology for engaging with PeP.

Ideas about sources for extra finance of PeP:

* Business sector
* Directorate of the European Commission in charge of Citizenship
* Through new coalitions at European level

***Messages***

*‘*What we miss here is the link between policy and PeP. For instance, during the last PeP meeting we were concerned that with regard to topics on which we have already positions work has been repeated by discussing again with PeP what our position should be. We find this worrying as through the EUISG processes are in place to develop positions through its members. We should avoid duplication of work and the risk of having different positions. For the PeP meeting other actions can be envisaged if we already have a position on a topic: for instance work with pep on the position which is there to refine, gather examples and do joint campaigning and advocacy actions during the meeting. If policy and pep are disconnected, we risk that PeP speak at their own expense (their voice doesn't represent the position of a larger group) or is used in a tokenistic way (they read at loud the position we already have). PeP should be supported where needed when participating in the structures of EAPN, to ensure that an equal dialogue takes place. We suggest an EAPN-handbook for this.’

*‘The PeP group must not be an autonomous group but play its role in total agreement with the EAPN structures and in particular with the ExCo.’*

*‘For us it is not very clear what the role here is of national members. We very strongly support the participation of PeP. For us it is important that when PeP come to the EU level, that work has been done at the national level with a whole group (through our associations and regional networks) so that the people represent the voice of all and not only their own voice. Our positions which have been developed with PeP should in that regard also be respected. How will this be ensured through the actions mentioned here?’*

*‘All of our structures are equipped with inclusive methods to help PeP (and all) to participate on equal basis within our structures. And why the above?* (questionrefers to the establishment of the participatory research proposed in the answer)*? If we follow the Dutch resolution, we will have already input from the peps to feed into our policy work’.*

*‘National networks engage with people with a direct experience of poverty in different ways for different reasons. Some networks have a more collective approach where those experiencing poverty or exclusion engage with as members of a wider group advocating for change for their community, and might be leaders in their community. Others engage directly with people as individuals who are not as actively involved in a collective way in their community. At EAPN (Europe) level we have to recognise these different approaches, but as a principle must ensure that participation is meaningful and empowering*.’

# Priority area C: Building Public Support and Pressure for the eradication of poverty and end to neoliberalism austerity politics

Within this priority area three short-term, two mid-term and one long-term priorities were identified. Members mainly require outreach to build public support through social media, while traditional media was much less frequently recognized as main channel for increasing public support. One network claimed that this is not the objective of the national network. Majority of respondents recognized the need to increase funding for building public support in next 5 years, but less then half thinks that it is important to measure, to compare the levels of public support. Some members pointed to the potential problems in attempts to measure in such precise way the change in level of public support. There are different suggestions to evaluate previous communication, particularly in the EMIN project, to discuss more within the network how to redefine communication with public, to develop separate communication plans based on that discussion and conclusions.

Short-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Substantial increase in social media reach (twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) | 19 | 73.1 |
| Baseline indicator of current levels of public support | 13 | 50.0 |
| Substantial increase in traditional media reach (newspapers, TV) | 10 | 38.5 |

N= 26

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Establish a communication plan (internal and external); Guarantee more efficiency in the dissemination of the conclusions of PeP meeting; Action-based campaigns; Need to have an accessible message and critique of impact of current economic policy and how it could be different; Have taken time as a network to sit together to tease out how EAPN can most effectively build public support; Establishing professional looking campaign in social media (e.g. ONE); Creative campaigns such as EMIN. Manifestos etc.; EAPN social networks should have a page for each national network in the official language of the different networks). |

Mid-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Increased funding for building public support | 15 | 65.2 |
| Comparison of levels of public support against baseline, with X% increase in reported levels of support | 11 | 47.8 |

N= 23

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Get other countries to promote the journalism prize and promote the European journalism prize; Developed capacity to increase social media reach; No of activists/ influencers advocating for our topics; Have been able to turn policy positions/documents into very accessible tools for public support/engagement. |

Long-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Comparison of levels of public support against baseline, with % increase in reported levels of support | 16 | 84.2 |

N= 19

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Increased funding; Evaluation of EAPN activity and what impact it has had on public support; In relation to the implementation of other effective policies. |

Currently 12 out of 23 members who responded to the question reported that they are able to contribute to this priority area, while 9 others said they would like to contribute if provided with more funds. In addition to the financial support which was identified as main precondition for be able to contribute, in few cases capacity building was pointed out as well.

Potential sources of extra funding for raising public support:

* Business sector
* Directorate of Communication at the European Commission
* Creating a fundraising group of experts
* Approach social media companies for either direct funding or project funding
* Specific funders for certain annual strategic publications could be found.

***Messages***

*‘Substantial increase in the way (accessible language) EAPN presents its positions for the public. In this moment the main target is political, so if we want to reach the general public and even entities, the way we communicate must change’.*

*‘An evaluation based on EMIN 2 and other activities to analyze EAPN's strengthens and weaknesses with regard to building public support. EMIN 2 demonstrated that interacting with the public can be useful, but is difficult and that there are gaps in our structure’.*

*‘To increase the level of public support, I don't think an increase in funds is needed but an increase in political work with a person dedicated to doing this specific job in disseminating information about EAPN's work is definitely necessary.’*

*‘Again, a wider point. It is very difficult to measure general public support. It can also be very fleeting and often issue/campaign specific so hard to measure and hold. Also hard to tell what change in public support against poverty is because of EAPN.’*

‘More than devoting more resources, it is necessary to improve and refocus communication policy.’

# Priority area D: Advocate and campaign for social protection systems

There are two short-term, three mid-term and two long-term priorities identified in regard to the advocacy and campaigning for social protection systems. As two short-term priorities are identified by majority of respondents EMIN3 project and Directive on minimum wage. While majority of respondents agreed that mid-term and long-term priorities should be the increase of minimum income schemes that can be considered as adequate and increase in low paid workers who receive minimum wage, there were no proposals on what should be the increase rate in any of these cases.

Short-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| EMIN3 project is secured and underway | 17 | 68.0 |
| Directive on Minimum Wage secured, which meets EAPN demands | 17 | 68.0 |

N= 25

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Minimum wage - linked to Living wage; Couple with Social Pillar, and make priorities accordingly, and primarily on (nb) country level. Certain areas, though, on EU level. NNs decide degree of involvement; Lobby for the existence of a Directive on Minimum Income; Work on in work poverty; Campaigning for directive on Minimum income; Active inclusion recommendation updated or commitment renewed / other specific initiative to support social inclusion; Ensure a Strategy to fight against Poverty at European level, with specific goals, inspired by the SDGs. |

Mid-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| X% of minimum income schemes can be considered adequate | 17 | 73.9 |
| Civil society participation strengthened, via treaties or another instrument | 14 | 60.9 |
| X% increase in low paid workers receiving minimum wage | 11 | 47.8 |

N= 23

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| The focus should be on a living income/wage with access to preventative health and social care services included in an effective social protection system; EAPN expert on in-work poverty; X Minimum Wages moving towards a Living Wage; Increase in the indicator of reduction of poverty after social transfers (increased effectiveness of social protection systems to prevent/protect from poverty and SE). |

Long-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Priority area | N | % |
| Y% of minimum income schemes can be considered adequate | 15 | 75.0 |
| Y% increase in low paid workers receiving minimum wage | 15 | 75.0 |

N= 20

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Reduction of poverty and social exclusion to X percent of the EU population; Improvement of the quality and efficiency of social welfare policies. |

Among 24 members who replied to the question, 18 (75%) said that is currently able to contribute to this priority area. Remaining seven said they would like to contribute, but for that they would need financial or organizational support, training or change of broader circumstances, such as different government more ready to work in this area.

Sources of funding this priority area:

* ETUC
* Local authorities
* Core budget of EAPN

***Messages***

‘A directive on minimum income is for us the priority, a minimum wage directive is important as well, we believe that the unions have the lead on this and we could contribute to their work on this.’

*‘I think also these options are in different level and it is hard to answer - EMIN-project itself is not a same kind of objective as a directive for minimum wage. That EMIN3 has a some kind of impact on ensuring a sufficient minimum income for all could be an objective.’*

*‘Push for minimum income for all groups of people based on a holistic, transformative approach to social protection based on economic, cultural and social rights. it should include access to services as an integral part of this approach. social rights approach’.*

*‘There is minimum income directive, X percent of countries have changed their policies or practices with regard to minimum income, good practices of countries are gathered and shared on the EAPN-website and on social media’.*

*‘Work for the creation of a European Observatory for the knowledge of the phenomena and causes of poverty.’*

*‘EAPN cannot commit to adequate minimum income schemes percentages because everything depends on political and economic environment. The objectives must be revised and we must speak on advocate and lobby for the improvement of minimum income schemes.’*

# Underpinning activities

The most often recognized short-term need is the clear strategy on how to strengthen members, while new sources of funding and staff visits were pointed by almost half of respondents. Low priority is given to the links with anti-poverty structures outside of Europe in short, mid or long run.

Short-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Underpinning activities | N | % |
| Clear strategy on how we will strengthen our members | 23 | 88.5 |
| Funding secured from X new sources, reducing reliance on our core funding by 20% | 12 | 46.2 |
| X staff visits to national networks to build understanding and coordination | 12 | 46.2 |
| Links established with X anti-poverty structures outside of Europe | 6 | 23.1 |

N= 26

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Staff visits to EOs to build greater involvement and make better use of expertise; Regular exchanges between the different subgroups moderated by EAPN (ExCo, EUISG, ad-hoc working groups); To encourage study visits between national networks to build understanding, coordination and alliances |

Mid-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Underpinning activities | N | % |
| Coherency between all areas of work of EAPN can be clearly demonstrated (projects, funding, advocacy, communications, training) | 17 | 70.8 |
| EAPN leadership training programme developed and implemented – X leaders trained | 15 | 53.5 |
| Funding secured from X new sources, reducing reliance on our core funding by 35% | 10 | 41.7 |
| Links established with X anti-poverty structures outside of Europe | 7 | 29.2 |

N= 24

|  |
| --- |
| Other issues mentioned by less than 3 members |
| Strengthened networking (through projects, shearing the experience) |

Long-term objectives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Underpinning activities | N | % |
| Funding secured from X new sources, reducing reliance on our core funding by 50% | 15 | 71.4 |
| X leaders trained | 11 | 52.4 |
| Links established with X anti-poverty structures outside of Europe | 4 | 19.0 |

N= 21

Among 27 members who replied to the question, 13 (61.9%) said that are currently able to contribute meaningfully to the underpinning activities. Eight members said they would like to become able to contribute.

Sources of funding this priority area:

* Fundraising group of experts
* EU programs for training and capacity building
* Foundations or organizations whose mission is the strengthening of civil society